

Facelift & Neck Lift

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Recovery is a partnership. The care you give yourself in the coming weeks directly affects your results.

Read this entire document now — not when a question comes up. Your caregiver should read it too.

Call or text us at 775-525-1712 any time you are unsure. You may also text photos of your incisions.

1. WHAT TO EXPECT — NORMAL AFTER SURGERY

The following are normal — do not panic:

- Swelling and bruising — peaks around days 2–3, then gradually improves
- Tightness in the face and neck — loosens significantly over the first month
- Numbness, tingling, itching, or shooting sensations as nerves heal — can take months
- Asymmetric swelling — one side often looks different from the other; this is normal
- Mild sore throat from the breathing tube — resolves within 1–2 days
- Drainage from incisions — expected for the first 48–72 hours
- Firmness or lumpiness under the skin — normal, resolves over 2–4 months
- Emotional letdown, regret, or mood swings in the first 1–2 weeks — very common, passes with healing
- Mild fever up to 101°F in the first 24–48 hours — often from anesthesia; take deep breaths every hour

⚠ CALL US IMMEDIATELY — or go to the ER after hours — if you experience:

⚠ Rapidly increasing swelling on ONE side of the face or neck (possible hematoma)

⚠ Bright red bleeding that saturates dressings or does not stop with light pressure

⚠ Fever above 101°F after the first 48 hours, or signs of infection: increasing redness, warmth, pus

⚠ Severe pain not controlled by your medication

⚠ Shortness of breath, chest pain, or leg swelling with pain (possible blood clot — call 911)

You may also text photos to 775-525-1712 if you have a question about how something looks.

2. DAY-BY-DAY RECOVERY GUIDE

DAY OF SURGERY

- Rest completely — bed rest with bathroom privileges only
- Have your caregiver with you at all times
- Keep head and upper body elevated — on pillows or in a recliner (30–45 degrees)
- Apply ice packs or cold compresses to face for the first 24–48 hours — do not apply directly to skin
- Drink clear fluids slowly; advance to soft foods when ready
- Do NOT remove any dressings or drains until seen by Dr. Yamamoto
- Start stool softener (Colace/Docusate) tonight — narcotic pain medication causes constipation
- Take all prescribed medications as directed; always eat something first

DAYS 1–2

- You will be seen in our office for your first post-op visit — dressing check and wound review
- Get up and walk around the house for 5 minutes every 1–2 hours while awake — reduces blood clot risk and improves lymphatic drainage
- Continue head elevation at 30–45 degrees when resting and sleeping
- Continue ice packs to face for swelling through 48 hours
- You may shower after your first post-op visit — lukewarm water only, no soaking
 - Gently wash hair and incision areas; let water run over them, do not scrub
 - No hot tub, pool, or bath until all incisions are fully healed
- Compression strap, if given: wear at all times except when showering or cleaning incisions
- Continue antibiotics and stool softener as prescribed

DAYS 2–7

- Incision care: clean twice daily with Q-tip dipped in 50/50 hydrogen peroxide and water
 - After cleaning, apply a thin layer of Aquaphor Ointment to incisions
 - Continue until all crusting is gone and incisions are fully healed
- Compression strap: continue wearing as much as possible — all day and night if tolerable
- Switch from narcotic pain medication to Tylenol only as soon as pain allows
 - No aspirin, ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, or Aleve for at least 3 weeks after surgery
- Avoid bending over, straining, or lifting anything over 10 lbs
- Avoid turning head sharply — turn shoulders and body as a unit if needed
- No driving until you are off narcotic medications and can turn your head comfortably
- Continue soft diet — avoid foods that require heavy chewing
 - Minimize sodium to reduce swelling; avoid caffeine and alcohol

SUTURE REMOVAL (Days 5–9)

- Day 5–6: Sutures in front of ears and under chin will be removed at your office visit
- Day 8–9: Staples and remaining sutures (hairline, behind ears) will be removed
- After sutures are out, keep incisions clean and moisturized with Aquaphor
- You may begin applying Cetaphil or a gentle moisturizer to surrounding skin

WEEKS 2–3

- Compression strap: wear nightly for sleep; during the day as much as tolerated
- Light activity is fine — short walks, light household tasks
- No strenuous exercise, heavy lifting, or anything that raises your heart rate significantly
- Do not bump, stretch, or rub your face
- Avoid blow dryer on high heat; no curling iron near incisions
- After Day 10: Lymphatic massage is recommended — ask us for a referral (optional but encouraged)
- No hair coloring for 4 weeks after surgery
- No alcohol until off all prescription medications

WEEKS 4 AND BEYOND

- You may gradually resume exercise — start with light cardio, then increase as tolerated
- No heavy lifting (over 10 lbs) for 6 weeks total
- No submersion in pool, ocean, or hot tub until incisions are fully closed and healed
- Continue sun protection: SPF 30+ on all scars for at least 6 months
- Final results take 6 months to fully appear — be patient with asymmetries and firmness in the interim
- 6–8 weeks: compression strap may be worn during sleep if desired for maximum results

3. COMPRESSION STRAP

Wearing your compression strap consistently is one of the most important things you can do for your results.

It minimizes swelling, holds skin in proper position, and reduces healing time. The more you wear it, the better.

- Week 1: Wear all day and night — remove only to shower, clean incisions, or change clothes
- Weeks 2–3: Wear as much as possible; at minimum, wear during sleep
- Weeks 4–8: Optional — nighttime wear only if desired for maximum compression benefit

- The strap should feel snug but not painfully tight — think of it as gently hugging the neck and jaw flat
- Keep seam facing outward; position securely under the chin
- Avoid looking down at your phone — this shifts the strap. Hold your device at eye level
- If the strap is uncomfortable or does not fit well, call us

4. MEDICATIONS

TOPIC	INSTRUCTION
Pain (narcotic)	Take as needed for the first 3–5 days. Always eat before taking. Wean off as soon as tolerable.
Pain (Tylenol)	Switch to Tylenol (acetaminophen) when narcotic is no longer needed. Max 3,000 mg/day.
Antibiotic	Take Cephalexin (or prescribed antibiotic) twice daily until the full course is complete.
Stool softener	Take Colace (Docusate) twice daily starting the night of surgery. Continue while on narcotics.
Anti-nausea	If nauseous from pain medication, take anti-nausea medication 20 min before the pain pill.
Arnica/Bromelain	Optional. May continue post-surgery to help with bruising and swelling.
AVOID	No aspirin, ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, or herbal supplements for 3 weeks after surgery.
AVOID	No alcohol while taking any prescription medication.

⚠ **Do NOT drive while taking narcotic pain medication. This is a DUI risk and a safety risk.**

⚠ **Pain medication refills cannot be called in after hours or on weekends. Plan ahead.**

5. ACTIVITY & LIFESTYLE QUICK REFERENCE

TOPIC	INSTRUCTION
Walking	Start day 1 — 5 min every 1–2 hours while awake. Gradually increase each day.
Driving	No driving until off narcotics and can turn head comfortably (typically 5–7 days).
Exercise	No strenuous activity for 3–4 weeks. Light walking fine from day 1.
Lifting	Nothing over 10 lbs for 3–4 weeks.
Bending over	Avoid for 3–4 weeks — raises pressure in the head.
Sexual activity	Follow same restrictions as exercise — no exertion for 3–4 weeks.

Head position	Elevated 30–45 degrees when resting/sleeping for 1–2 weeks.
Showering	OK after first post-op visit (Day 1–2). Lukewarm water only.
Hair dryer	Cool setting only for 1 week. No heat near incisions.
Hair coloring	Wait 4 weeks after surgery.
Makeup	May begin 3 days after suture removal.
Earrings	No earrings for 8 weeks — earlobes are fragile.
Sun exposure	SPF 30+ on all scars for at least 6 months.
Pullover clothing	Avoid for 8 weeks — use button-front or zip-front only.
Smoking	Continue abstaining for 8 weeks post-surgery. Smoking can cause wound failure.
Alcohol	Avoid until off all prescription medications.
Pool / hot tub	No submerging until incisions are fully healed and closed.

6. INCISION CARE

- Clean incisions twice daily with a Q-tip dipped in 50/50 hydrogen peroxide and water
- After cleaning, apply Aquaphor Ointment to incisions
- Continue until all crusting is fully resolved
- Showering is fine — let lukewarm water run over incisions gently; do not scrub
- No submerging in bath, pool, or hot tub until fully healed
- Keep all scars out of direct sun for at least 6 months — sun exposure can permanently darken them
- Use SPF 30+ any time you are outdoors

Scar maturation takes 6–12 months. Early scars are pink, firm, and visible — this is normal. After all scabs have fallen off (typically 3–6 weeks post-surgery), you may begin silicone scar gel to help flatten and soften scars. Ask our office for a recommendation.

7. FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

VISIT	WHAT HAPPENS
Day 2	Dressing removal, wound check, compression strap fitted, shower instructions reviewed
Day 5–6	Suture removal — incisions in front of ears and under chin
Day 8–9	Staple and remaining suture removal — hairline and behind ears
6–8 Weeks	General recovery check, clearance for activity, discussion of scar care

3 Months	Progress photos, aesthetic assessment, address any concerns
6 Months	Final results evaluation

Follow-up visits are your responsibility until cleared by Dr. Yamamoto. Please call to schedule.

A note from Dr. Yamamoto:

You have just had a significant procedure, and your recovery matters deeply to us. The healing process is not always linear — some days will feel better than others, and that is normal. Please do not compare your recovery to what you see online. Everyone heals differently.

If something does not look right or you have any concerns at all, reach out. It is always easier to address a question early than to manage a problem later.

Call or text us at 775-525-1712. We are in this with you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read and understand these postoperative instructions. I agree to follow them completely. I understand that following these instructions is my responsibility and that failing to do so may compromise my safety, my results, and my recovery.

Patient Signature	Date
Patient Printed Name	Witness / Staff Signature